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SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 16, 2011

Mr. Alan Bersin  
Commissioner  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Mr. Bersin:

With the upcoming tenth anniversary of the September 11th attacks, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection should be commended for its efforts to keep our airways safe and secure.

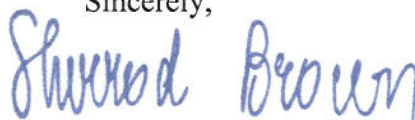
According to a recent report in The Columbus Dispatch, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has changed its procedures for inspecting international flights arriving at the Port of Columbus. The article notes that planeside inspection of international flights was cancelled due to security concerns.

I share your commitment to ensuring the security of our airports. But I believe that if new security measures are enacted, they should apply to all similarly-situated airports. According to the Dispatch report, the decision to cancel planeside inspection of flights arriving at the Port of Columbus differs from the policies in place at other similarly-situated airports. As a result, some international flights bound for Columbus now land first at other U.S. airports to avoid the delays in Columbus. I am concerned that if flights bound for Columbus are needlessly re-routed, the result will be increased costs, delays, and a competitive disadvantage that could undermine Columbus' attractiveness as a place to do business.

It is critical that we ensure the safety of our airports while also investing in the economic competitiveness of Central Ohio. The Columbus region is home to world class universities and research institutions and 15 Fortune 1000 headquarters, according to the Columbus Chamber of Commerce. According to a 2005 independent study cited by the Columbus Regional Airport Authority, the economic impact of the three airports in Central Ohio includes nearly 30,000 jobs, \$793 million in payroll, and \$2.7 billion in annual economic activity.

I ask that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection review its policy regarding planeside inspections at the Port of Columbus. No one wants special accommodations for the Port of Columbus. Rather, international business flights arriving in Columbus should be treated in a manner consistent with other similarly-sized airports. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown  
U.S. Senator